

A JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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Judging from the number of subscribers already on our mailing list, and the comments of scholars who received the first issue distributed at the M.L.A. meetings in Boston, we are glad to announce that the 18th Century News Letter is off to a healthy start. Begun under the sponsorship of Group VIII of the M.L.A., it is intended as an informal medium for the exchange of ideas among active research workers.

Already we have received a number of news items, queries for information, and short announcements, and hope more will be forthcoming. So send in whatever items of interest you have, and make known your problems!

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The New York Times of Dec. 31 and the TLS of Jan. 4 announce the destruction in a recent air raid of the Gough Square Johnson House. Unfortunately, the British Embassy and the British Library of Information can provide no details about the completeness of the loss.

To many of us what memories the name Gough Square brings back! The spirited and voluble caretaker, Mrs. Rowell, always quoting Boswell "by the yard"; dinners of the Johnson Club held in the garret where the Dictionary was compiled; the generous and hospitable donor, Lord Harmsworth; the quiet eighteenth century atmosphere of the old house, filled as it was with memories of a great age — these can never be eradicated. Let us echo the TLS: "These losses are lamentable; but they do not affect the real London, which does not live in its monuments."

SPECIAL NOTICE

The American Council of Learned Societies has received from the Rockefeller Foundation a grant of \$30,000 to secure microfilm copies of important material in danger abroad. While it is not known exactly how much can be photographed in England just at this time, your editor suggests that lists of material likely to be needed, not only for present active projects, but for important potential projects be sent to him as soon as possible, and he will send them on to the proper authorities.

It is important to do two things: (1) indicate the items or blocks of items most desired; (2) supply needed data as to the location, number of pages, etc., if such information is readily obtainable.

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Maurice Quinlan (Joseph College, Hartford) sends in an 18th century forerunner of the SRL literary quizzes. Sharpen your wits on this "Enigmatical List of Poets and Dramatic Writers" from the Sentimental Magazine in 1773 (I, 323, 369).

1. Iron hardened and refined, and 1/3 of the instrument of fight.
2. Nimble.
3. What we do when we join quantities of numbers together, and two-thirds of a certain malignant quality in some creatures and plants, dangerous and destructive to others.
4. A place of worship, and a contraction of evil.
5. Brisk and lively.
6. Two-thirds of a drunkard, and an expression used for an expeditious.

7. The place of our most constant residence.
8. One-third Harlequin's mistress, and a creature endowed with reason.
9. A country upon the coast.
10. 36 Barleycorns, with the initial of the last and most intelligent of all quadrupeds.
11. A town in Kent.
12. Violent motions, a well-known pulse and half an element.

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NEWS FROM ENGLAND

Damage to the University of London is described in a letter, dated Nov. 26, 1940, from Charles Sisson (now in Aberystwyth, Wales) to Raymond D. Havens (Johns Hopkins):

"The 'University' building, i.e. the new Senate House behind the British Museum, was hit, but I understand that the bomb was more damaged by the Senate House than the Senate House by the bomb. It was University College [Gower St.] unfortunately, the 'founder' building of the University, that was very considerably smashed. Wilkins' splendid portico, I'm glad to say, stands. The 'University' library is untouched. But the College library lost about a hundred thousand books, about a quarter. And my own personal library vanished with all my collections, - and all my files of periodicals, - a severe blow for an editor....

The University is scattered, - University College is in several units: here, at Bangor, Cambridge, Oxford, Southampton, Exeter! But we improvise...."

Philip Gove (NYU) writes that Strickland Gibson, Bodley's Sub-Librarian, is preparing for the next publication of the Oxford Bibliographical Society the first minute book of the Delegates of the O.U.P. So far, Oxford has not been bombed, and it is crowded with visitors from other cities, some say as many as 50,000.

L. F. Powell writes from Oxford that his index for Boswell's Life is now 3/5 completed and that he hopes to have it all done by next summer. He comments on a Johnson Club luncheon meeting to be held at Brown's Hotel in London on December 13th, showing that scholarly life progresses almost as usual. Sadly he refers to the death in action of John Beresford, the editor of the Woodforde diaries, who was an Air Raid Warden.

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Why not try for the free subscription to this News Letter offered in the first issue for the most amusing error in fact in the DNB account of any 18th century figure? As a sample, consider the case of Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi. She is correctly listed as having been married Oct. 11, 1763; but the account of her eldest daughter (under Elphinstone, Hester Maria) states that "Queeney" was born in 1762! Many unfair things have been said about Mrs. Piozzi in the past, but this mistake, wholly unintentional, is the most devastating.

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NEW INDEX TO OBITUARIES

The inadequacy of the various indexes of obituary notices for the late 18th century has been obvious to most research scholars. Lustgrave's Obituary is incomplete, and the Gent. Mag. lists are not always easily available. To provide a complete record of obscure persons a new index is now being prepared at Yale University under the direction of Benjamin Nangle. This compilation will extend from 1731 to 1825.

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Answers to the Quiz

1. Steele; 2. Swift; 3. Addison; 4. Churchill; 5. Gay; 6. Otway; 7. Home; 8. Colman; 9. Cumberland; 10. Foote; 11. Rochester; 12. Shakespeare. We hope you guessed the elephant in 10!

MANUSCRIPT SALES

The Parke-Bernet Galleries, 30 E. 57th St., New York City, have very kindly offered to cooperate with this News Letter, by sending notices about coming auctions of 13th century material. In this way information about the sale of important unprinted manuscripts may be broadcast more thoroughly to all parts of the country.

The most important dispersal in many years will begin this spring with the sale of the collection of the late A. Edward Newton. A brochure regarding the Newton collection will be issued in the next few weeks by the Parke-Bernet Galleries; and the catalogue itself - in three parts - will be issued during March. The sale itself will be divided into three sections, alphabetically according to authors: A to D on April 8-10; E to M on May 6-7; N to Z in the autumn.

An interesting experiment in the merchandizing of rare art objects and fine books is to be carried out by Gimbel Brothers and Saks Fifth Ave. in New York, in placing on sale a large portion of the collection of William Randolph Hearst. A catalogue has now been issued which lists items to be sold - the prices only to be had on application. Unfortunately, among the books, autographs and manuscripts offered there are not many to interest an 18th century scholar. To be sure, the collection does contain a fine holograph letter of Edmund Burke to William Dowdeswell about the Stamp Act, and others of Rousseau and Fanny Kemble etc.; but in the main the MS letters are 19th century or American. The books include a number of extra-illustrated sets, notably Johnson's Lives of the Poets, Walpole's Letters, but no manuscripts are listed as included in these.

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Copies of the first issue of this News Letter are still available.

Recently the Historical Records Survey, the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, and the Committee on Documentary Source Materials of the American Historical Ass'n. have initiated a co-operative undertaking, to supplement information contained in the series of publications being issued by the W.P.A.: Guide to Depositories of Manuscript Collections in the United States. Questionnaires are being sent out to obtain information on current accessions of manuscripts by the depositories described in this series. From such information, a union list of manuscripts accessions will be prepared and kept in the Library of Congress. It is hoped that at a later date the list will be published.

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Bob Metzdorf, the indefatigable curator of the R. B. Adam Johnson collection, now in the Rush Rhees Library of the Univ. of Rochester, wishes it known that he welcomes requests for information about the manuscripts in the collection.

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Suggestions

Raymond D. Havens (Johns Hopkins) makes the excellent suggestion that at the MIA meeting in Indianapolis next December an informal luncheon be planned for 18th Century enthusiasts. There you might meet the man whose article you enjoyed last year, or the lady who so disagreed with your interpretation of that controversial passage. Let us know what you think of the idea.

Rudolf Kirk (Rutgers) proposes that we run lists of interesting manuscript materials available for study in this country. For instance, he wishes it known that the Rutgers Library has bought a large volume of John Nichols' letters. In a later issue of this sheet he hopes to list the correspondents' names.

